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The Bible and Religion in the Public Schools

THE character of the education given in our public schools is a matter of profound moment. The state gathers into these schools over 26,000,000 of its 32,000,000 youth of public school age. It practically monopolizes the time they can give to education for from ten to twelve years of their impressionable lives. The education the state gives them profoundly effects their future lives and the future life of the nation.

Shall this education be religious, or secular? Shall the Bible and its great moral and spiritual truths be included in the curricula of these schools, or excluded therefrom?

At first and for many years, the Bible was in all our public schools, and the religious element was prominent throughout our system of public education. About 1870 an aggressive minority, led by unbelievers and misguided sectarians, started a movement which resulted in excluding the Bible from our public schools, and when the Bible went out, religion went with it, and our schools became secular. Dean Weigle of the Yale Divinity School has well said, "To exclude religion from the public schools is to surrender these schools to the sectarianism of atheism and irreligion."

In permitting her public schools to be secularized, America sowed to the wind and is now reaping the whirlwind.

Today we have an army of 3,500,000 criminals. Last year 1,500,000 major crimes were committed within our borders. More and more these crimes are committed by our youth. "It is a national disgrace," declares J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I., "that in 1939, 12% of all murderers, 29% of all robbers, 33% of all thieves, 46% of all burglars, and 54% of all automobile thieves were under voting age."

More than 80% of this vast criminal army is recruited from the millions of youth we have allowed to grow up without any religious training. All of our churches —Protestant, Catholic, Jewish—have been able to reach with religious instruction considerably less than one-half the youth of this country of school age. The more than half they are not reaching, get no religious training in their homes. Formerly they received at least some religious education in the public school. But since religion went out of these schools, these millions have been allowed to grow up pagans—ignorant of God and His Commandments.

The American people are awakening to the terrible mistake made in secularizing our schools and are fast restoring the Bible and religion to them.

Until 1913, when Pennsylvania enacted a law requiring the daily reading of the Bible in her schools, only one state had such a law — Massachusetts, enacted in 1855. Since that time ten other states have enacted similar laws, and the Bible is read to some extent in the schools of 29 other states without requirement of law. A more recent, and more important development, is the introduction of Bible Study courses in the schools. At first these courses were given outside the schools, but more and more they are being given in the schools, on school time, and frequently by teachers employed and paid by the state.

From all over the land—from parents, from educational and religious and business leaders—there is an increasing demand for restoring the Bible and religious education to our public schools.

This is a great movement. Let all good citizens, all Protestants, Catholics and Jews join hands in carrying it forward to a successful issue.

RESTORE THE NATION'S BOOK TO THE NATION'S SCHOOLS

GOD IN OUR SCHOOLS

Rev. W. S. Fleming, D.D.

Formerly Director of Department of Bible in the Public Schools of The National Reform Association.

"The Pastor's Journal" is published six times a year by the Methodist Board of Home Missions, apparently for all the pastors of the Methodist denomination. In the current number there is an extended editorial on the "Public School" that must speak encouragingly to readers of the Christian Statesman. Quite extended quotations are given for readers of the Statesman, as follows:—

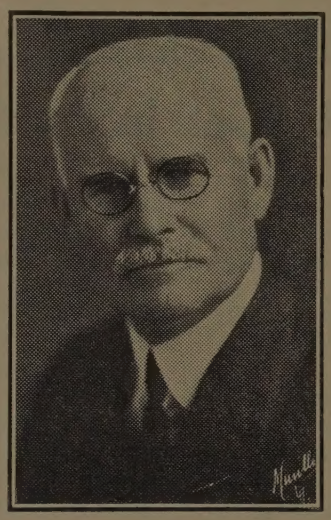
"A New York State Committee, headed by Owen D. Young, recommends that, for the sake of our future citizenry, religious nurture be included in the public school curricula of that state.

"The *Christian Advocate* quotes F. Ernest Johnson as saying, 'There is enough common in our religious heritage so that the schools might well initiate children into religious experience. . . . They should equip our young people for religious participation in community life.'

"The editorial comments of T. Otto Nall on the foregoing quotation include the following: 'Those who wrote religious liberty into the Constitution did so because they wanted freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. They feared sectarian teaching even as we do, but they would probably be amazed to discover that such a fear has prompted us to deny religious instruction at a time and place where it is needed greatly. And they would surely be aghast at our high rate of spiritual illiteracy'.

"*Zion's Herald,* in a leading editorial, quotes J. M. Murry's 'The Price of Leadership,' as follows: 'The continuance of democracy depends upon the ruling class being consciously Christian'. Editor L. O. Hartman says, 'The author closes with an appeal that democratic governments reconsider their religious responsibilities in the light of origins'.

"The public school is the one institution which, with certain minor exceptions, does reach each oncoming American generation. If that generation is to be reached in its most susceptible years by religious influence, then the program designed for the purpose will have to be carried out by the school or the church at some time when the children of the community are assembled for public school work.



REV. W. S. FLEMING, D.D.

"Millions of Americans have grown up in public schools, where the Bible was read and prayer offered. In some states the reading of the Bible in the public schools is required by law.

"The proposal which is now in the air goes further. It may sound revolutionary and yet we believe it is worthy of thorough examination and discussion before it is discarded, namely, shall we encourage the public schools to teach those basic religious concepts which are held more or less in common by the people whom we call Americans?

"If there is a more important subject for discussion and action so far as the future of the Christian religion and American democracy is concerned, we do not, at the moment, know what it is."

Wants Religion Taught In Philadelphia Schools

Immediately following the above editorial is a quotation from the (Nashville) Christian Advocate headed "Philadelphia Schools Urged to Teach Broad Religion." This editorial is as follows,—"Dr. A. J. Stoddard, superintendent of the Philadelphia public schools, called upon the 12,000 school employees to teach religion 'in its broader and larger concepts' as one means of meeting the increased need of preserving American ideals through the medium of education. United support in resisting to the utmost any attempts to weaken continued faith in the fundamental character of American democracy was urged by Dr. Stoddard in addressing what was said to be the first public assembly of school teachers and other board of education employees in the city's history. Faith in the home, religion, school and the integrity of the individual were listed by Dr. Stoddard as the four great fundamental faiths of our democracy. All these ideals, he added, are closely related to and part of the educational process. 'Religion,' Dr. Stoddard declared, 'is an intimate, fundamental part of the American scheme of life.' The primary object of school, we believe, is character building. We are going to teach religion in the schools, not on a narrow, partisan basis or through the interpretation of religious beliefs, but in its broader and larger concepts!"

Re-enthrone God In the School Room

To one who believes to the bottom of his soul that God must be re-enthroned in every school room of the land if our nation is to be saved from collapse, these quotations look like a bright harbinger of a better day. A bit over 20 years ago I was as ignorant as any bonehead in the land of the value of religion in education, tho I was a product of the public schools and a teacher for years. One day about 1918 an elderly Baptist layman asked to speak ten minutes to the Chicago Methodist ministers. He advocated the required daily use of the Bible in all public schools, and the question was referred for report to the Public Policy Committee, of which I was chairman. I felt like throwing the bigoted ignoramus out. He and I debated the matter in my office often, and sometimes bitterly, for the next three months. The conclusion was that I felt myself to be the ignoramus, and my report to the preachers held that to save our democracy, to save our civilization we must saturate our public educational system from kindergarten to university with the great moral and religious concepts of the Book of God. To my surprise they adopted the report.

In those days I often represented Chicago and Illinois church bodies at the legislature battling against moral ills of the day. Then at the advice of friends I went with the

J. Edgar Hoover on Youth and Crime

There is no greater authority in America on crime and its causes than J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States government. In response to a request to Mr. Hoover from the editor for the latest crime statistics and anything he wished to send on the crime problem and how to solve it, we received a very courteous letter, the latest Crime Bulletins published by the F.B.I. and several recent addresses of Mr. Hoover on the crime situation. The figures on crime that follow are from Mr. Hoover, therefore reliable. We also quote at length from what Mr. Hoover has to say regarding the crime situation and how to meet it.

1,500,000 Major Crimes Per Year

In this country there is actively at work a criminal army of 3,500,000. In this civilized nation there are now three and a half as many criminals as there are students in our colleges and universities. For every school teacher in America there are four criminals.

During 1939 the number of serious crimes committed — crimes worthy of penitentiary punishment — was 1,484,554. Every twenty-four hours 4,000 major crimes are committed within our borders. Every twenty-four hours in this civilized country there are committed an average of 33 murders, 160 robberies, 800 burglaries, 2,200 larcenies, and 120 aggravated assaults. This does not include 36,000 lesser infractions that occur daily.

The annual crime bill of the U. S. is $15,000,000,000. This is a bill of $28,500 per minute, $41,040,000 per day. Each man, woman and child in America pays a crime bill of nearly $120.00 per year.

Youth Criminals

Crime is a youth problem and becoming more so. In 1939 there were more arrests for age 19 than for any other single age group. In frequency of arrests age 19 was followed by ages 18, 22, 21 and 23 in the order mentioned. The number of arrests in 1939 for each of the above age groups follows:

Age	*Number of Arrests*
19	25,191
18	24,225
22	24,007
21	23,788
23	23,092

One-fifth of All Arrests, Youths Under 21

The percentage of the total persons (all ages) arrested who were under 21 years of age, for each of the past four years follows:

Year	*Percentage of Total Arrests*
1939	18.9%
1938	18.8%
1937	18.0%
1936	17.4%

It is indeed a national disgrace, declares Mr. Hoover, that during the year 1939, 12% of all murderers, 29% of all robbers, 33% of all thieves, 46% of all burglars, and 54% of all automobile thieves were under voting age.

"Persons who are little more than children form one-fifth of our most dangerous heritage. It appears inconceivable; yet it is stark fact that our misguided boys and girls are thieving, robbing, holding up banks and stores and shooting down employees, proprietors and the police who attempt to capture them. Try as I may I cannot forget that 19% of our crime is being committed by youths of less than voting age." (Someone, not Mr. Hoover, is authority for the statement "that the average age of American criminals in 1890 was 48 years; in 1933, 26 years; in 1938, 19 years."—Editor.)

The Remedy

"There is no possibility of wiping out crime by trying to reform criminals. The time to strike at it is when the youth is ready to be moulded into an adult." Who is to blame for this crime situation? Mr. Hoover says, not the youth. "To bring about this horrible picture somewhere the institutions of our civilization have failed. I include our system of education."

Schools Failure

"Education against crime should be a primary factor in our common schools. It should be listed as even more important than reading, writing or arithmetic. Our schools have failed to teach inexorably and faithfully a proper observance of law and moral goverance."

"Let us work toward a strengthening of the old foundations. We have too much eyebrow lifting, too much sneering and snorting at the old traditions which have done a very good job."

"The fact that some Americans lack moral fortitude does not mean that the church has failed; on the contrary it has not been given a chance. What we need today is a return to the principles of decency and honesty, and charity among men. **What we need is an inculcation of the immortal lessons of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount in the hearts and minds of all Americans.** This is the surest antidote to stem the rising tide of lawlessness."

While Mr. Hoover in his messages does not touch on the question of daily Bible reading and prayer, and religious instruction in the public schools, certainly this is in line with what he does say as quoted above.

In any case the crime situation he presents and his statements as to how to meet it are strong and compelling reasons for giving the Bible and moral instruction with religious sanctions, a place of major importance in our public schools. There only can all American youths be reached with this instruction.

National Reform Association, and carried on the same battles before many state legislatures. At first my campaigns were largely successful, but ultimately every battle was lost. But I was thinking a lot and at last decided that, leave religion out of the schools, and battle as we might against prize fights, race track gambling, liquor, Sabbath desecration, etc., we would lose the battle and the war and chaos would come; but, forgetting every other issue and get God in the school houses of the land, all these moral maladies would in time disappear of themselves like snow before an April sun, and our American democracy would again live gloriously. In that newborn conviction I worked and fought for ten years in many states for the return of the Book to our schools. I had some success, but with far too great cost, considering the vital subject I advocated.

Now, retired, sitting on the side lines, earlier punch considerably gone, my conviction is as strong as ever, stronger, if possible, that only an educational system permeated with the vital message of the Bible can save our civilization from final collapse.

RESTORE THE BOOK THAT MADE AMERI

The Bible is the best gift which God has given to man. But for that book we would not know right from wrong. All those things desirable to man are contained in it.

—Abraham Lincoln

The Bible is the book of all others to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life.

—John Quincey Adams

It is impossible to govern the world without the Bible.

—George Washington

The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty.

—Thomas Jefferson

The Bible is the rock on which our Republic rests.

—Andrew Jackson

We are indebted to the Book of Books for our national ideals and institutions. Their preservation rests in adhering to its principles.

—Herbert Hoover

The American nation from its first settlement at Jamestown to this hour is based upon and permeated by the principles of the Bible.

—Justice Brewer, U. S. Supreme Court.

There are great problems before the American people. I would be afraid to go forward if I did not believe that there lay at the foundation of all our schooling and all our thought the incomparable and unimpeachable Word of God.

—Woodrow Wilson

Almost every man who has by his life work added to the sum of human achievement of which the race is proud . . . has based his life-work upon the teachings of the Bible.

—Theodore Roosevelt

There are many compelling reasons for including daily devotional Bible reading and prayer, and Bible study courses in the curriculum of all the public schools of the United States:

The Bible furnishes the 26,000,000 youth in these schools with the noblest ideals of life and the strongest motives for their realization.

To build the character of these 26,000,000 youth — a character that will stand the strain of our Twentieth Century life — this is the greatest task, the highest responsibility of our public schools. The Bible is the greatest character-building book in the world. The schools must avail themselves of its use before they can successfully meet this responsibility.

The Book to which we are indebted for our liberties, our ideals and form of government, our laws and institutions, and which has inspired our loftiest patriotism, must be in the nation's schools and taught its youth, or these things which have been the glory and strength of America will disappear from our national life.

Building the character of the nation's youth in her schools, with the aid of the best textbook on morals and religion, is the most effective way of meeting the terrible crime situation our country is facing today.

With the Bible and what it stands for left out of our public schools, at least one-half of the youth of the nation (more than 16,000,000 of the 32,000,000 of school age — 5 years to 17 years) will grow up in moral and spiritual illiteracy. All our churches — Protestant, Catholic and Jewish — are able to reach with Bible instruction considerably less than half the youth of this country of school age. The millions unreached receive no religious and little moral training in their homes. Unless it is given them in the nation's schools, they will grow up to manhood and womanhood as ignorant of God and His laws as pagans.

The state takes 26,000,000 American youth into its schools for six hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year, for ten to twelve years of their lives, thus practically monopolizing the time they can give to education. Let it devote its energies exclusively to the development of their bodies and intellects, and neglect to develop their moral and spiritual natures, and thus, when they reach seventeen years of age send them forth, intellectually strong but morally weak, to battle with life's temptations. Let the state do this, and it sins against these youth. The immortal souls of these boys and girls, as well as their bodies and minds, are in the keeping of the state for all this time, and it is bound to look after their development.

Exclude the Bible and religion from the public schools, and these schools will prejudice the youth against the Bible and religion. They will convey to the youth the impression that in the judgment of the state, the Bible and religion are of such small account in fitting them for

O THE SCHOOLS THAT MAKE AMERICANS

life and citizenship, that they are not worthy of a place in the great educational system of the state. The secular public school makes more difficult the work of the church and the Christian home.

The crowning reason for giving the Bible and religious training a place of importance in our public schools is that only by so doing can we prevent the downfall of our democracy. The sure way for a democracy to commit suicide is to set up a completely secular system of education.

At first and for long, the Bible was in the public schools of our country and religion was an integral part of our entire system of public education. Not only was the Bible read in our schools. Many of the reading lessons were selections from the Scriptures and the religious element was prominent in the teaching of history. This was true up until about 1870, when an aggressive minority, led by atheists and misguided secularists, was allowed to push the Bible out of our schools and secularize our system of public education. By so doing, our nation sowed to the wind and is now reaping the whirlwind.

The American people have awakened to the terrible mistake they made and for the past twenty-five years there has been an ever growing movement to restore the Bible and religious instruction to our public schools. In 1913, Pennsylvania enacted a law for required daily Bible reading in her schools. Until that time only one state, Massachusetts, had such a law, enacted in 1855. Since 1913, ten states have enacted similar laws. In some twenty-nine other states the Bible is read to some extent without requirement of law.

A more recent, and still more important development is the introduction of Bible study courses into many schools throughout the country. At first these courses were given, not in the schools, but in churches, on school time. More and more they are being given in the public schools, under their supervision, and in not a few cases by teachers employed and paid by the state.

From all over the land — from parents, from educational and religious leaders, from Chambers of Commerce — there is an increasing demand for restoring the Bible and religious education to our public schools.

For many years The National Reform Association has carried on an educational work on behalf of this movement. It has published leaflets, pamphlets and books on this subject which have been widely distributed. Its speakers have discussed this subject throughout the land from pulpit and platform. It has participated in many campaigns for state laws for required daily Bible reading in the schools. It led the campaigns in Kentucky and Arkansas which resulted in the enactment of laws for required daily Bible reading in all the school rooms of these states. It is now actively participating in the movement for required Bible reading and to establish Bible courses in the schools. For information and literature write the National Reform Association, 209 Ninth Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The state's right to punish crime involves its duty to teach morals.

—Daniel Webster

Nobody knows how to teach morals without religion. Exclude religion from education and you leave no foundation on which to build moral character.

—Dr. Charles W. Eliot, Former President of Harvard.

A system of education that gives no place to religion is not in reality neutral but exercises an influence, unintentional though it be, against religion. For the state not to include in its educational program a definite recognition of the place and value of religion in human life, is to convey to the children the suggestion that religion has no real place and value.

—Luther A. Weigle, Dept. of Religious Education in Yale.

When I consider my starvation and that of hundreds of my mates I am appalled by the criminal negligence of a school system which ignores the possibilities of soul culture. And one reason for that immorality and crime in America today that have reached their ghastly and still increasing flood level is because our school system from kindergarten through college does not teach God.

—Honore Willsie Morrow, in Christian Herald.

I want my children taught religion in the schools. I want that but I do not want any ecclesiastical teachings.

—Hon. P. C. Claxton, Former U. S. Commissioner of Education.

In our fear lest Protestants gain some advantages over Catholics or Catholics over Protestants we have given over our schools to unbelievers and secularists.

—Archbishop Ireland

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BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS ISSUE

This issue of The Christian Statesman is devoted to the cause of promoting daily Bible reading and prayer, and non-sectarian religious instruction in the public schools of our nation. This is a most important and promising field for effort. There is a growing demand today from many quarters that more attention be given to the development of the character of our boys and girls in the schools, and to this end that the Bible and religious instruction be included in the school's curricula. Will not our regular readers help us in extending the contribution of this issue of The Statesman to this cause. Will you not secure extra copies and place them in the hands of school superintendents, principals, teachers, members of school boards, officers of parent-teachers associations, pastors, religious education leaders, or send us the names and addresses of persons to whom you wish copies mailed. The cost is ten cents per copy.

ARCHBISHOP IRELAND'S WARNING

Fifty years ago, about the time the movement which resulted in excluding the Bible and religion from the public schools of our nation reached its culmination, Archbishop Ireland of the Roman Catholic Church in an address before the National Education Association, warned of the terribly dangerous experiment we were making in establishing a secular system of public education. The results he prophesied have come true. We are reaping today the bitter harvest of our sowing. Americans today would do well to give heed to his warning words:

"The state school teaches of land and sea, but not of God and Christ. . . . The pupil sees and listens and insensibly forms the conclusion that religion is of minor importance. Religious indifference becomes his creed. In keeping religion away from its schools no nation goes so far as ours. It is a terrible experiment on which we have entered. The very life of our civilization and of our country is at stake. Our schools consecrate secularism as the religion of America and are driving us toward secularism with the flood tide of a Niagara.

The American school as it first reared its log walls amid the villages of New England was religious through and through. The favor with which the non-religious school is regarded, is, I verily believe, due to the thoughtlessness of the moment and will not last."

RELIGION FIRST IN STATE SCHOOLS

A committee of the New York State Chamber of Commerce appointed to inquire into the efficiency and economy of the educational system of New York recently reported that it was "convinced that the great lack in our homes and in our national life is the lack of true, simple religion."

"In these workaday, warring, strenuous times we have been paying less and less attention to our religious convictions and feelings. Those convictions and feelings still exist — they are more important today than they ever were—and it is vital that in our education they be honored and promulgated rather than subordinated.

"If this nation does not maintain its religious foundations, its whole structure will fall.

"The United States cannot have or maintain a right system unless it is based on true religious principles, and, therefore, in spite of the fact that some hesitate to include religion in our educational program, we place it first."

A MODEL BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS' LAW

Maine has a model law for required daily Bible reading in its public schools. The law does not forbid comment on the Bible reading, only sectarian comment. Neither does it forbid Bible teaching,—only sectarian teaching of the Bible. The law excels in giving the reasons for its requirements. The law enacted in 1923, follows:

"To insure greater security in the faith of our fathers, to inculcate into the lives of the rising generation the spiritual values necessary to the well-being of our and future civilizations, to develop those high moral and religious principles essential to human happiness, to make available to the youth of our land the Book which has been the inspiration of the greatest masterpieces of literature, art, and music, and which has been the strength of the great men and women of the Christian era, there shall be, in all the public schools of the State, daily or at suitable intervals, readings from the Scriptures with special emphasis upon the Ten Commandments, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Lord's Prayer. It is provided further that there shall be no denominational or sectarian comment or teaching, and each student shall give respectful attention but shall be free in his own forms of worship."

The Bible in Kalamazoo Schools

Kalamazoo, Michigan is a hustling manufacturing city of 60,000 population, probably best known for its stoves since "A Kalamazoo Direct to You" heats many American homes. It is also becoming famous for the Bible work which is being done in its public schools. The school authorities and teachers there believe that since the whole child goes to school it is the duty of the schools to prepare the whole child for the duties of life and citizenship, and the citizens stand back of them. Eleven years ago we received from the Superintendent of the Schools of this city an outline of the Bible work which was being done in the schools, which we published. In response to an inquiry as to whether this work was being kept up we have just received a letter from the present Superintendent of the Kalamazoo Schools, Loy Norrix, in which he says that in nearly every respect the work is being continued. It includes the following:

1. At least ten minutes are devoted daily in every room to devotional exercises including the reading of the Bible.

2. The children from the third to the sixth grades inclusive, receive Bible instruction in school from their teachers who are paid by the state.

3. In the senior high school elective courses are offered in the historical and literary values of the Bible. The classes are taught in school during school hours by regular school teachers under state pay.

4. Committing to memory choice portions of the Bible; dramatization and pageantry form part of the

work, with occasional public entertainments featuring Bible stories.

Formerly about 1,500 children were excused from school to attend religious instruction in the churches. This has been discontinued Mr. Norrix says, "not so much because of an attitude of the schools as for lack of facilities within the churches."

Recently, Mr. Norrix says, each teacher in their schools received from the Gideons the gift of a Bible. Congratulations to the schools and citizens of Kalamazoo, on introducing the Bible and non-sectarian courses of Bible study into their schools and keeping it there. Kalamazoo is blazing a trail. What is being done there can and should be done in thousands of other cities and towns throughout the land.

OPEN DOOR FOR BIBLE TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS

Recently there came to the office of The National Reform Association a letter from Leonora W. Wood of Keyser, West Virginia, in regard to supplying copies of the Bible for use in teaching the Bible in the public schools of the county in which Keyser is located. The letter stated that she had been teaching the Bible in one of the public schools of the county. As this is the new work that the Gideons have undertaken and are carrying forward so successfully, the letter was referred to the Vice-President of our Board of Directors, Mr. E. Clay Young, who is an active member of the Gideons and one of the Pennsylvania State officers of this organization. Mr. Young replied promising the help of the Gideons in providing the Bibles needed. Mrs. Wood replied in a letter which shows the readiness of the school authorities to have the Bible taught in the school, the interest of the school pupils in its study and the wide open door for the extension of this work. Doubtless there are thousands of communities where the door is just as wide open. We quote from Mrs. Wood's letter as follows:

Dear Mr. Young:

I have your very kind letter of February 23rd in regard to the Bibles of which I wrote to The National Reform Association and referred to you. I am more grateful to you than I can say for the assistance offered, and wish it were possible to picture to you the conditions under which the people are living in the community of Limestone, two miles from Keyser, in which we have started the teaching of the Bible in the public school, where we have fifty students, in six classes. The eagerness of these children to know God's Word, their response, and appreciation, is amazing. After five months of our work in the school there is not one of the children that has not memorized numerous passages of Scripture, and not one that does not lead in prayer.

"If you could but hear these prayers, and know of their poverty, and suffering, many times from actual hunger. There are numerous children that go for days without anything that could be called 'a meal.'

"We have, however, been able to supply every child in the school with a Bible. But the work has created so much interest in the county, that our Superintendent of Schools is extremely anxious to have it started in other schools, particularly in the areas that are like the section in which we are now working, and the county is full of communities in like condition. There is another within a mile of us, where there are over two hundred children.

"I have been requested to talk to the principals of the county schools at their next monthly meeting, and to try to interest them in helping to work out plans for having the Bible taught in all the schools. And we are praying that some way may be opened up by which this can be done. If the means could be provided for taking care of the expense.

"If some plan could be worked out whereby the public school teachers, under supervision of a Bible teacher (one person in the county) would teach the Bible for an hour each week, the work could be started in all of our schools. We would have the interest and cooperation of the Superintendent of Schools and of County School Board."

With sincere appreciation,

LEONORA W. WOOD.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

In February we received an order from Mrs. H. B. Wolbert, Director of the Department of Sabbath Observance of the Pennsylvania State W.C.T.U., for 50 copies of "Six Studies on the Day" for the county directors of this department throughout the state. A letter Mrs. Wolbert sent to these directors recommends the study of this book by their local unions.

Recently The National Reform Association purchased 100 beautiful colored slides on Alcohol. The Association has the use of a splendid stereopticon lantern for showing these pictures on the screen. The Association is now giving an illustrated lecture on "Health and Alcohol" in which these slides are used. The lecture is being given to senior and junior high school students in school auditoriums and the slides are also being used in classroom instruction in the public schools. The illustrated lecture will also be given at public meetings. Those in the Pittsburgh area interested in securing this lecture either for the schools or public meetings, write The National Reform Association, 209 Ninth St., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for dates and terms.

Dr. Martin spent three weeks recently in the east attending a meeting of the Pennsylvania Federated Legislative Committee in Harrisburg, the annual meeting of the National Temperance and Prohibition Council in Washington, speaking in Boston and Philadelphia and working in the interests of the county liquor leaflet in the latter city. Rev. H. B. Mansell also attended the Harrisburg meeting and distributed many thousands of pages of National Reform literature at the Farm Show attended by ten thousand people.

National Reform Conference at Winona Lake, Indiana, July 22-28th. Arrangements have been made with the Winona management for Dr. W. W. T. Duncan, member of the Association's Board of Directors and pastor of the Lakewood Methodist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, to be the guest preacher at Winona on Sabbath, the 28th. His messages on this day will be the closing messages of our conference and will be given at the regular Winona church services.

The Beaver County (Pa.) Committee of The National Reform Association is undertaking an extensive program this year. All pastors in the county are being asked to preach on the subject of the Sabbath on April 19th. Each pastor will receive copy of "Six Studies on the Day," and Bible classes throughout the county will be provided with copies of this book on condition they will study this subject. Arrangements are being made for giving the illustrated lecture on "Health and Alcohol" in the schools throughout the county and at public meetings. A county wide rally will be held on Sabbath, April 7th at 2:30 P. M. in the United Presbyterian Church, Beaver. Speakers, Dr. Walter L. Moser of Pittsburgh and Dr. Martin.

Dean Weigle on Religion in the Public Schools

In an address last month before the annual meeting of the International Council of Religious Education, Luther A. Weigle, Dean of the Yale Divinity School and an outstanding authority in the field of religious education, came out strongly for making religion in its broader aspects an integral part of education in the nation's public schools. He is quoted in the public press as saying:—

"To exclude religion from public schools would be to surrender these schools to the sectarianism of atheism and irreligion. Sectarianism must be kept out of the public school curricula, but there is nothing in the principle of religious freedom, or the separation of church and state to hinder the schools' acknowledgement of the power and goodness of God.

"Our nation has declared its faith in God in many ways—in the Constitution of the States, in its legal oaths, and in its legal holidays for religious events. The common religious faith of the American people, as distinguished from the sectarian forms in which it is organized, may rightfully be assumed and find appropriate expression in the life and work of the public schools. The public schools should include in their life that basic elemental faith which is deeper and more fundamental than any of religion's institutional or sectarian forms—the faith that relates human life to God."

Very evidently Dean Weigle is not speaking about having the students of our public schools released for one or two hours of schools time to go to their respective churches (those of them who have any) to be taught religion by pastors, priests, or rabbis. He is speaking of having the youth in our public schools taught religion in the schools as part of the regular school curricula and by teachers qualified to do this teaching, employed and paid by the state. Dean Weigle goes down to bed-rock when he discusses this issue. He asserts the right and duty of the state to do this work in its own schools.

To the Christian Statesman and the National Reform Association which have always advocated this view, it is most encouraging when educational and religious authorities of such recognized standing as Dean Weigle so strongly and convincingly advocate this view. This is the true view and the sooner our educational and religious leaders adopt it, the sooner will we reach a satisfactory solution of this problem of religious public education.

Gideons Place Bibles in Public Schools

The Gideons, widely and favorably known as a group of Christian traveling men banded together to place the Bible in hotel rooms, hospitals and prisons (1,451,812 Bibles so placed to date), at their International Convention at Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1937, voted to extend the scope of their ministry to include the placing of a Bible on the desk of each teacher in every public school room in America. At once with vigor and efficiency they began work in this new field. Already they have had marvelous success. A letter concerning this work just received from Mr. S. A. Fulton, West Allis, Wisconsin, recently President of the Gideons, says: "The work is coming to us in such volume today that we are wondering just how to take care of it. We have had wonderful acceptance. Cities like Minneapolis, Duluth, Denver, Los Angeles, Dayton, Ohio, have been pretty well Bibled, that is a Bible for each schoolroom. The rural districts are very easily reached when we can get there. They like and accept the Bible gladly."

The March issue of the Gideon lists schools where they have recently placed Bibles as follows: Paterson, N. J., 727 Bibles; Acton, Ontario, 70 Bibles; Goderich, Ontario, 84 Bibles; Palmyra, N. J., 48 Bibles; Dearborn, Mich., 125 Bibles; Canton, Ill., 65 Bibles; Binghamton, N. Y. 547 Bibles. Former issues report 2,000 Bibles placed in Lansing schools, 9,000 in Toronto, Canada schools, etc.

From the Gideon leaflet on this subject we quote:

"In our hotel work we have been reaching the maturer classes who travel. In our school Bible ministry we shall deal with the great masses of the American people-to-be, in their eager, formative years. Our hotel work is largely one of rescue. Our school ministry, one of prevention."

In our judgment this is the most important and far-reaching step which the Gideons have undertaken. We have often wondered why they did not enter this much larger and most promising field of service. We are rejoiced to know they have done so and that the field is opening before them in such a marvelous way. In these recent days when there is cry coming from so many quarters for the religious training of our youth in the schools, surely the hand of God is in this new movement of the Gideons. To the Christian Statesman and The National Reform Association which have championed the cause of the Bible in the public schools for seventy years, it is a matter for profound gratitude that this splendid Christian organization has entered upon and is pursuing so zealously this field of Christian service.

What Is Best In My School

By Eric Watson, Student

With the ushering in of industrial changes, educational specialization, and many new types of social activities, a great change has come about in the modern American High School. Consequently, many phases of school life which formerly were considered necessary to a well-balanced program have been omitted. Among these, Chapel is one phase which I believe should be retained at any cost. I am glad that the rush of life and lack of interest in spiritual things has not crowded Chapel from the picture of our daily program at Wilkinsburg. (Chapel attendance 1800—Editor.)

Every morning I look forward with a great deal of expectancy to the ringing of the bell which calls for Chapel assembly, for it is a spiritual retreat in which the faculty and entire student body share in communion with God. The Chapel program is not in the least elaborate, but is marked by simplicity which enhances its vitality. After God's Word is read, our choir sings a hymn prelude with such spiritual depth that I forget the cares of the day and repeat the Lord's Prayer with a feeling that God hears and answers the breathed petitions of our hearts. After a choral amen, the entire assembly joins in a hymn and then Chapel ends all too soon, but I return to my classes with new strength for the problems to come.

Perhaps some do not understand how a Chapel service so simple in form can be so rich in influence, but the true worth of our Chapel may be gleaned from the words of hundreds of Wilkinsburg graduates who have returned from time to time and testified to the abiding influence it has had in their lives.